



Sioux County Schools

435 Kate Street
P.O. Box 38
Harrison, NE 69346
308.668.2415

Brett Gies, Ph.D.

Superintendent
bgies@panesu.org

Tuesday, December 04, 2012

TO: All Staff
FROM: Brett Gies
RE: Writing Process and Practices

Cyd led us in an exercise to help us understand the scoring process of a grade 8 narrative writing paper. The exercise helped us to make sense on how to use the NeSA analytical scoring guide. We also talked about what specific feedback a teacher would give the student to help them improve their paper.

We used the stronger than weak and weaker than strong process as a first step in determining the level of writing. Teachers scored the paper individually then we compared as a group by a show of hands. Then using the scoring guide, teachers shared their reasons for scoring the paper the way they did.

Next Steps

1. We will have a staff meeting on December 13th to use the same process with a grade 11 writing prompt and scoring guide. Dash will lead the discussion and process.
2. At the December school board meeting, I will ask the school board for permission to change the 2013 school calendar. I will ask them to approve having school on Feb. 18th for all students in exchange for no school on Feb. 20th. We will use Feb. 20th as a professional development day led by Michelle Kezzler of the ESU 13 staff.
3. Teachers should have students write on a regular basis and provide specific feedback based on the criteria on the NeSA analytical scoring guide.
4. Teachers should provide a replica of the writing assessment environment on a regular basis. We will provide more details on this at a future meeting.

November 14, 2012

TO: All Staff
FROM: Brett Gies
RE: Writing Process and Practices

Thank you for your guidance, discussion, and feedback on how to improve our students' writing abilities.

The following are notes from this morning's meeting.

1. Cyd, Heather, Karen, and Dashiell attended the ESU scoring training. They provided insight to how student NeSA-W is scored.

2. I shared comments from Julie Downing on the importance of students being able to write to a clear main idea with explicit supporting details in order to score at least a “3” on the NeSA-W. If students cannot do this, they more than likely will not score a “3”. Students need to be able to write several explicit supporting details not just repeat one or two.
3. All teachers should focus on main idea and supporting detail in all content areas, not just when writing in English class.
4. Our writing committee representatives shared the following:
 - Organization is vital
 - The five paragraph theme is not a must
 - Use the recycled state writing prompts that are available for practice
 - NeSA-W topics will be geared towards life, experiences, and culture in NE
 - Use peer review with the rubric so students can learn the scoring process and how to improve their writing
 - Teachers should model and use the NeSA-W rubric and how to make it stronger/weaker and weaker/stronger method
5. Teachers must make copies of the NeSA-W before submitting them to the State for scoring
6. Parents will receive a report on the NeSA-W for their child’s performance.
7. All teachers will be receiving a document camera before Christmas vacation. This is an excellent teaching tool to enhance your instruction in teaching/modeling writing.
8. We will ask Michelle Kezzler from ESU to provide 2-hour chunks of writing training by grade spans (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12). Country teachers will bring their students to town and have them participant at HGS classes while teachers attend training.

Next Steps

1. Our next staff meeting is scheduled for November 28th at 7:15 am. This will be a GoToMeeting.
2. Before the next meeting, all staff will use the NeSA-W with their students. Teachers will highlight the NeSA-W rubric as was discussed by the writing representatives this morning.
3. All teachers will bring writing samples to the next meeting to share with each other to compare scoring.
4. Brett will pursue bringing Michelle Kezzler to SCS for writing training.

September 6, 2012

TO: All Staff
FROM: Brett Gies
RE: Writing Process Meeting Notes

Listed below is a synopsis of the discussion we had on the writing process.

This year’s writing committee is spear headed by Karen, Cyd, Heather, and Dash.

Karen reviewed the NE rubric with us. She emphasized the need to look horizontally across the rubric to see how the scoring changes for each category.

Teachers should visit the NDE website for resources.

Cyd shared her idea of creating individual folders by proficiency areas on the NDE rubric. The folders contain writing samples for students to review.

Students are to be given a weekly writing prompt to write to as a means of enhancing their writing skills.

Teachers should provide specific feedback to students each time they write. The specific feedback will give students the knowledge they need to become better writers. Students need to feel us push them to a higher level of writing proficiency.

Colorado has writing samples posted on their website teachers could access.

We will purchase Evan Mor for all teachers who need this resource for younger students in the lower grades.

Heather shared how she uses the self-assessment tool provided by NDE and recommended teachers should use it in their classrooms. It allows students to see what is expected of them.

We should use student peer to peer scoring to help students learn what is expected of them in their writing. It will also enable them to understand the writing process even better.

Next Meeting is scheduled for Sept. 20th at 7:15 am. This will be a Go To Meeting. All teachers will have students write to a prompt that will be emailed from Karen for grades 1-4 and by Cyd for grades in 5-8. Dash will bring papers from high school. The prompts should be returned to the designated person by grade level by Sept. 14th so they can be distributed to teachers in time for our meeting on the 20th. The prompt will be a cold write, no editing allowed. Students in grades 4-8 should use the computer when composing to the prompt.